The COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XXXIV *August* 15, 1941 NUMBER 16

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index* and *Catholic Bookman.*

Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York
Annual Subscription: U. S. and Canada, $5.00; Foreign, $6.00

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Russian Participation—II

ELSEWHERE in this issue we print excerpts from British Catholic editorial comment on Russian participation in the war. As might be expected, the general tenor of this comment expresses inalterable opposition to communism and acceptance of the situation, brought about by Hitler, in which the armed forces of the Soviet Union are fighting against a German invasion of Russian territory and, consequently, are the *de facto* allies of Great Britain. By extension, and to the degree that the policy of the United States is pledged officially to assist in the destruction of nazi power, the Soviets are immediately and in fact allied also to our own effort. For this reason the British comments are not of simple academic interest.

They explain and justify the inevitable. Nor do they leave any loose ends lying about. Provision is made for a change in the Russian social structure through the taking over of control by the army, or by a "strong man." (A white Russian in a box car?) Even the eventuality of a German defeat is envisaged—in which case it will be found that the "German Army is not the only bulwark between the Continent and Red Ruin." It is all very logical, and far seeing.

Readers of course will compare these views with current and considerably contrasting American pronouncements; for instance with Archbishop Beckman's intransigeant certainties and with Father Gillis, who in the *Catholic World* writes on "The Covenant with Hell." We are not debating the issue. We may say however that these distinguished Americans can hardly be expected to accept Russian collaboration in pursuing an aim whose moral validity they deny. If Germany is not the immediate peril, or if war is not the means to combat that peril, or if communism is the greater threat, then, indeed, the preferable alternative to accepting Russian aid would be—as Rudolph Hess may have suggested—to abandon the war against Germany. British Catholics, excusably enough, refuse the premises from which this reasoning starts. Nor do we, ourselves, find them wholly acceptable.

We find unacceptable also the unimaginative, heartless, self-centered and pharisaic tone of much that is said and written about the people of Russia—by those who accept the support they are furnishing to the cause in which they believe, and by those who would wall them outside of humanity and even, if one admits the inference in Father Gillis's title, beyond redemption. The problem that will face Europe and the world when and if the German new order is broken is one before which all of us stand awed. In that chaos, in which men will have to learn to trust each other as a child learns slowly how to speak, it is very possible that communism—not the communist army, but the enduring temptation of communist thought—will be the menace of our age. Against that threat and that temptation, all Catholics and all free men everywhere will stand firm. But if we are destined to combat communism until it, too, is broken in its organizations and in our minds and in the distress and injustice from which it evolves, we must not take our stand in the cold, lonely abstention of doctrinaire self-interest. There must be no untouchables, no pariahs. Behind the veil of the systems men are living and dying. We cannot reach the thousands in Germany with whom we would speak. We will reach them later. We can reach now deep into the conscience and the hopes of the Russians.

The barriers are falling everywhere. United in the suffering of war the world will remain united in the agony of reconstruction. Political modes must be found to frame this unity—this unity of suffering and anxious and exhausted men. The unity the nazis propose is that of subservience to their will. It is not possible for us to accept it. The unity the communists propose is based on a philosophy we reject. The unity toward which we must look can spring only from the fraternity of man.

More Stick

"IT WAS essential from our own selfish point of view of defense to prevent a war from starting in the South Pacific. So our foreign policy was: trying to stop a war from breaking out down there. . . . Therefore, there was . . . a method in letting this oil go to Japan, with the hope—and it

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has worked for two years—of keeping war out of the South Pacific for our own good, for the good of the defense of Great Britain and the freedom of the seas." So President Roosevelt on the day before appeasement ended. Then we froze Japanese assets, stopped shipments of oil and imports of silk, refused licenses for airplane gasoline; the British and Dutch acted in concert with us. The big stick had taken the place of appeasement. Said the *New Republic*: "Every consideration of psychology and strategy dictates that instead of making more futile threats, we now act. Impose the full embargo, and then let Japan face the alternative of buying her way out or suffering complete collapse. Let her try to appease us for a change." And Nathaniel Peffer in the *Nation*: "Nothing will deter the Japanese now except concrete material reprisals as a foretaste of sanctions by force."

So far events have not shown any disposition on the part of Japan to try to appease us. Japanese troops are reported massing on the borders of Thailand, which seems inclined to yield to "New Order" pressure; Americans in Japan don't know how they can get home, because no more Japanese ships are coming to our ports. There are even rumors of Japanese-Russian fighting along the Manchurian borders. And Japan has taken a stiff line with Ecuador over anti-Japanese feeling in that republic.

The *Warspite* has been seen in the Gulf of Siam, and two of our own heavy cruisers are in Australian waters; so the big stick is still the order of the day. Now it is reported that Kaname Wakasugi is on his way from Washington to Tokio to report Ambassador Nomura's serious view of the situation. It may be that Japan sees no way out for her except to call our bluff, and if she does, the result may be the very thing the President appeased to prevent—fighting war in the South Pacific. Appeasement failed; now the policy of action seems to have had little effect. The Far East is still our tinderbox.

Fending Off Inflation

THERE is every indication that prices in this country are off to the races, *à la* 1914-16. Growing scarcity of certain commodities, rising wages and farm prices, continuous increase in the volume of commercial loans and unparalleled plant expansion, together with New Deal government expenditures the highest yet, all point in only one direction. What can be done to protect the country from the scourge of inflation? The administration makes some attempt in its current price-control bill on industrial prices and rents, setting July, '29, figures as a ceiling. But this bill also provides that farm prices have as a ceiling 110 percent of 1923-5 parity, and Congress looks favorably on another bill which would prevent the government from selling any of its accumulated surpluses of loan cotton and wheat during the present emergency. There is no mention either of any legislative or other provision for any ceiling on wages, nor are there adequate taxes on defense earnings to provide a deflationary counterweight. Fear is, therefore, widely expressed that the current price control bill would be largely ineffectual. With mortgages so important a factor American farmers have for decades been in favor of more greenbacks and inflation; the fact that farm prices have been at sub-parity for so long makes the farm bloc particularly rambunctious when they see a good chance to profit at the national expense. Until recently the majority of American workers had not attained a living wage either.

But surely labor leaders with long-range view must realize the folly of continuously rising wages. In the long run inflation has proved to be fatal to both farmers and workers, as it is to national prosperity. What better time for farm and labor leaders to rise above particularisms and work together for the true interest of the groups they represent? And in this national emergency the administration itself might set an example by being less exclusively and short-sightedly solicitous for those two pillars of its political support. Unless we seriously attempt to control all the leading factors that influence prices and unless taxation is much more pay-as-you-go, every group in the country will once more suffer from inflation and its disastrous aftermath.

Average Americans and the War

MID-SUMMER this year is a good vantage point for investigating to what extent the American people in their daily lives are being affected by an outside world at war. There come first to mind the men drafted for the armed services, those whose careers have been interrupted in mid-flight, or never even started. Especially since legislation pending in Congress appears ready to consign them to the US armed forces for many months to come. The war has reached these men and their families, their sweethearts and close friends. Yet even here are many compensations that make things anything but grim. Where draftees have not been sent very far away, as is often the case, visits home are possible about every other weekend. Life in many of the camps is pleasant enough, if only from the fact that there is not much yet for the men to do.

There is also a growing series of smaller groups seriously threatened by the increasing curtailment of supplies of strategic war materials and the Japanese embargo. Workers are already being laid off in the nation's silk mills and the rayon producers are fearful that the 10 percent of their production decreed to be set aside for

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stockings will be so inexpertly converted into hosiery that American women will never again purchase rayon stockings. There are all those connected with the American silk industry in any way, a considerable number of people whose livelihoods are now suddenly jeopardized. In the durable goods industries — automobiles, radios, electric refrigerators and electric washers and ranges — production seems destined to be curtailed by one-third, on the average, with all the dislocation of personnel that that means. And on the Eastern Seaboard there is the contraction to be expected because of a like reduction in gasoline consumption. Finally there are such promoters as salesmen and advertising men faced with the fact that sales of their products will now be governed by how much of each product is available. When *any* new product will do, the game of beating out competitors is over. The present plight of salesmen is graphically epitomized by the fact that oil companies have actually been urging car owners in the Eastern states to use (and buy) *less* gas.

In contrast with the status of these and other affected business groups is the boom noted in all corners of the land. The expansion of the national economy under the impetus of the national defense drive is felt everywhere. Summer resorts this month are doing a land office business, while the sales records of expensive commodities right down to date, when material shortages are beginning to take effect, have reached record proportions. Employment has attained a new high, while relief rolls have drastically shrunk. Thus far salaries, wages and profits have kept several jumps ahead of the rising cost of living, despite the fact that farm prices are well up too. As a nation we are enjoying the upward surge of the falsest of false prosperities, little reckoning the accounting inevitably to come, and, well-insulated by distance, immigration laws, diffidence, taking little account of the titanic struggles now proceeding in Europe and the Orient. For most Americans at the present moment business seems a good deal better than usual.

Minor inconveniences are merely beginning to impinge upon our untroubled day to day existence. Once the current scrimmages in the nation's department stores have subsided, there will be no more silk stockings to be had. The outlook for business and personal taxes is increasingly ominous. For many families the old car, the old radio and the old ice box (1936-39 models) will have to do for another year or more. And gasoline seems destined to be rationed for a while along the Atlantic Seaboard. Americans who grumble about these things might do well to turn from their petty irritations and compare such inconveniences with the ordeal which for months has been trying by fire millions of souls in Africa, Asia and Europe. In view of the tremendous forces battling to gain world mastery, have we Americans any reason to expect to enjoy a charmed life indefinitely?

Another Link Broken

NINETEENTH CENTURY Harvard was celebrated for its philosophers and for many a scholar in special fields of enquiry. But above all it was distinguished for its leadership in the study of English literature. As Latin and Greek gradually declined in importance, English literature came to take their place, and this process dates back much further than we might think. It started a good fifty years ago, and it was given incentive throughout the country by a group of particularly brilliant teachers. About 1930 English literature in its turn began to lose popularity, and students, abandoning literature altogether as the foundation of a liberal education, turned more and more to the social sciences.

One of the greatest figures among teachers of English—almost the last to survive—was George Lyman Kittredge. No student who ever came in contact with him forgot him. For to his genius at scholarship he added a genius for showmanship. There can be little question but that much of his eccentricity and seeming affectation was a technique to make stick in recalcitrant adolescent minds things which would otherwise have gone in one ear and out the other. These tricks after years of practice became a part of Kitty's nature; one almost wonders whether he treated his family as he did his students.

But this much is certain: he never allowed his incredible scholarship to degenerate into pedantry; and however much he may have insisted upon seemingly futile care on the part of his students, this insistence had a motive. He could not stand sloppiness of thought or expression. He would go into a rage when careless people spoke of witch *burnings* in New England; he insisted that what the New Englanders did was to *hang* their witches. This accuracy and regard for intellectual discipline has sadly become less and less fashionable. Even graduate students chafe at having to go through the effort of learning foreign languages; and it was Kittredge more than any other single man who insisted that candidates for a doctorate in England at Harvard must go through a grueling ordeal of philological study. Of course all this insistence on historical accuracy did turn into pedantry with many of those trained in the Harvard system, but in Kitty it was good, and did good.

He was a living link with a life that is dead. It was fatally stricken by the last war, and this war has killed it. It was a life filled with decencies if over-burdened with conventions, and it is a life which more and more has only the power to evoke in us a sad nostalgia.

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Leon Bloy as We Knew Him

A few pages from
an autobiography.

By* Raissa Maritain

CERTAINLY Maurice Maeterlinck has no idea of the gratitude which we owe him; it was thanks to him that we came to know Léon Bloy, because of the merited tribute he nobly paid him after he had read "La Femme Pauvre."

Reading, by chance, in *Le Matin,* a literary column conducted by Louis Vauxcelles, a rather well-known art critic and journalist of the day, we came upon a sentence by Maeterlinck which I have always remembered: "If by genius," he said, "one understands certain *flashes in the depths,* 'La Femme Pauvre' is the only work of the present day in which there are evident marks of genius." This sentence quoted by Louis Vauxcelles in the course of his column was drawn from a letter written to Léon Bloy in June, 1897, and published by Bloy in one of the volumes of his journal.‡ Here is the text of this very beautiful letter which we did not know in its entirety until a little later:

> Monsieur, I have just read "La Femme Pauvre." It is, I believe, the only work of this day in which there are evident marks of genius, if by genius we understand certain *flashes in the depths* which link what is seen to what is not seen, and what is not yet understood to what will be understood one day. From the purely human point of view one is involuntarily reminded of "King Lear," and there are no other points of comparison in any literature. I beg you to believe, dear sir, in my very deep admiration.
>
> Maurice Maeterlinck.

We got and read at once this strange novel which is so unlike any other. For the first time we found ourselves before the reality of Christianity. Up to that time, in reading Corneille or Pascal, or even Ruysbroeck, something, I do not know what, masked from me Christianity's real being, placing it in some realm of art and imagination. Reading "La Femme Pauvre," we passed through the literary form as the spirits, they say, pass through walls, to go directly not to the author but to the man, the man of faith illumined by rays of that strange thing, so unknown to us—Catholicism—and so to speak identified with it.

This time magnificence of language meant little to me. For my taste, here was something only too magnificent! Those endless endeavors to note minutely ugliness or mediocrity, that fixed predilection for violence and force, the perpetual hyperbole, could have been tiresome in the end, and could have diminished, everything considered, the credibility of the story. But all was saved by a shining sincerity, an unswerving uprightness, a genuine, deep and inexhaustible lyricism, by the exquisite tenderness of a heart made to love absolutely, to cling entirely to what it loved.

By every evidence we were in the presence of a very great writer. But again this was not what held us at that time. What struck us so forcibly on first reading "La Femme Pauvre" was the immensity of this believer's soul, his burning zeal for justice, the beauty of a lofty doctrine which for the first time rose up before our eyes. Faith, poverty—"One does not enter into Paradise tomorrow—nor in ten years; one enters it today, when one is poor and crucified"—sanctity also exalted, indissolubly united—"Il n'y a qu'une tristesse, c'est de n'être pas des saints"; courage and independence of character where we would have expected to find obsequious conformity, the "darkness of the Middle Ages" and bourgeois pharisaism.

We were scarcely readers of the Prophets in those days, nevertheless we heard an echo of their voices in the voice of Léon Bloy. Grandeur, simplicity, unshakable conviction, disdain of contingencies, singleness of purpose likened him in our eyes to the sturdy and magnificent messengers of God.

Of this resemblance Léon Bloy himself was perfectly aware. Here for example is what he says in his journal, September 21, 1900:

> Personally I have no need of any man and I beg no man's favor. I obey a command from on high, as did the man spoken of by Josephus on the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem. This, until like him I shall be crushed. . . . But I rejoice for the honor of Truth in a little human justice.

Like the Prophets, he was impatient to see the Justice of God manifested on earth, to see God avenged for the injustice of men. Because what matters above all to the Prophet is the manifestation of divine glory.

"The Prophet," as he magnificently wrote, "is

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*These pages are part of a chapter in a book to be published in French under the title *Les Grandes Amitiés* (French and European Publications, New York), and in English under the title *We Have Been Friends Together,* translated by Julie Kernan, Longmans, Green, New York).

‡ Léon Bloy, "Mon Journal."

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above all a Voice which makes Justice come down on earth."

> If one absolutely wishes—either with or without irony—to give this magnificent name to a brawler like myself, one must also immediately accept this consequence, drawn from the very nature of things: such as one's cries will have the power to hasten disasters. It is in this sense that he will be a Prophet, as much as he can be without the divine instpiration, exactly as a man of prayer is a worker of miracles.

Jonah and Léon Bloy

Consequently, just as Jonah reproached a too merciful God, Who seemed to forget justice and what He owed to His Prophet's reputation for truthfulness, Léon Bloy declared himself dissatisfied with the last year of the nineteenth century:

> It could be and *should** be the year of the great convulsion. It does not even leave hope thereof for the next year, which will be the first of the twentieth century.
>
> Having for many years assiduously and reasonably prophesied havoc, I have the right to be disgusted.

Jonah had prophesied at the command of God saying: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

But the men of Nineveh did penance

> and God repented of the evil, which He said He would do unto them; and He did it not.
>
> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry. He prayed unto Yahwè and said:
>
> "I beseech thee, O Yahwè, was not this my saying, 'When I was yet in my country? Therefore I hasted to flee . . . For I knew thou art a God gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. . . . Now . . . it is better for me to die than to live.' And Yahwè replied, 'Doest thou well to be angry?' And stubbornly Jonah repeated: 'I do well to be angry even unto death.'"

In the same spirit Léon Bloy could also write: "I die of the need of Justice." Of this we are more impatient than God. Having so little time to pass in this world each of us wishes to see its bright victory here below.

"To sum all up," he said again, "what were my predictions, that is to say what were the innermost desires of my heart, my vehement and deep wishes for an epilepsy of the earth? . . . simply this. The Exposition [of 1900] . . . ought not to take place, because Paris and all nations will have enough to do with hardening their sinews against death."

That written in 1900! We then read these words with respect, but what agreement could our youth and ignorance have given to them?

But in 1914—in 1941!

He wrote in the month of August, 1902: "Present events are certainly hideous, but not vulgar as to their tendencies. . . . I therefore again think that we are at the prologue of an extraordinary Drama, the like of which has not been seen for twenty centuries, and I invite you to a certain degree of recollection."

Such words, such prophetic wishes abound to the end in the writings of Léon Bloy. But as yet we only knew "La Femme Pauvre" and the book—read immediately after—from which the above quotations are taken, "Quatre Ans de Captivité."

In reality Léon Bloy spoke like a man having to fulfil an extraordinary mission, from which nothing must deter him, a man definitely directed toward one thing, as instinct is, and who hastens toward this single goal despite all obstacles, like a torrent which drags the rocks and trees from its banks and carries them headlong with the mud and the pebbles from its bed.

Barbey-d'Aurévilly, with whom Léon Bloy lived on intimate terms from 1867 to 1889, said of him: "Léon Bloy is a cathedral gargoyle who pours the waters of heaven down on the good and on the wicked." The waters of heaven—and also God's wrath, as well as the personal indignation of the Prophet poured down equally on one and on the other. God Himself seems to speak by hyperbole, and when He punishes the wicked by the unleashing of Apocalyptic catastrophes, He seems to forget the innocence of the just; He does not shelter them. Does He not know that the love He holds in reserve for them will compensate them infinitely, eternally? And that what is chastisement for some is for others only an opportunity to grow in faith and hope?

Of all this we had but a confused understanding, but it was enough to keep us from judging Léon Bloy as we would any other writer.

Certain intolerably hasty judgments, on Tolstoy for example, would have made us indignant with any other writer. Certain implacable comments, so remote from any sense of human justice, upon catastrophes such as the fire at the *Bazar de la Charité*, or upon the earthquake in Martinique when thirty thousand men perished. But for Bloy, as in the absolute, it was a blasphemy to associate two words like *bazaar* and *charity*—a blasphemy which in itself called down the fire of heaven. No one thinks of the matter, doubtless, and the good will of this or that person is not in question. But it is nevertheless needful that at one time or another someone awaken us to the sense of words and loudly call to our minds the sense of things in themselves.

I do not mean to say that Bloy never gave way in human fashion to anger or resentment, or even that he was absolutely exempt from the faults of those men of letters who sometimes use words or literary forms which are called for by the demands of art but without asking themselves if these will not be as arrows in an innocent neighbor's heart. No. But we believed that here all such things were unimportant, were perhaps in a

* Underscored by Léon Bloy.

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way necessary, even if we did not see the reason, and that one should not dwell upon them; to do so would have been to run the risk of passing by something great and unique.

In fact we did not dwell upon them. The privilege of seeing in all Léon Bloy's work only Léon Bloy himself, the faith and divine love on which he really lived, made it possible for us not to commit an injustice toward him which was very often committed and from which he suffered all his life; namely of seeing in him only a "pamphleteer" and a "brawler," a haughty man and an "ungrateful beggar."

Léon Bloy could be at times a harsh and terrible pamphleteer, mistakenly unjust; a "brawler" as were the Prophets charged with crying out truth from the housetops and doing it in their native voices, which were not necessarily soft or agreeable; a "beggar" like Saint Francis of Assisi, or Saint Benedict Labre, persuaded like them that it is better to give than to receive and, as they chose to, accepting the condition of being one who receives, through the love for a God who took on poverty for our sakes. But ungrateful and proud Léon Bloy never was! No one could really have been his friend and fail to render him this testimony. It may be that his writings in themselves were not always sufficient to prove this to those who did not know him. Perhaps friendship alone is capable of bringing this point into focus.

After "La Femme Pauvre" we read one of his journals. Every two years Léon Bloy published his journal under different titles. This particular one, which had just been published—following "Le Mendiant Ingrat" and "Mon Journal"—was called "Quatre Ans de Captivité à Cochons-sur-Marne." This title also might have given an erroneous impression. Certain persons who had not taken the trouble to read the book had an unshaken conviction that in it Léon Bloy spoke of four years in prison! But "Cochons-sur-Marne" is simply the little town of Lagny where Bloy suffered more than anywhere else the captivity of misery, the anguish of solitude, the harsh contact with mediocrity. It is because we read the poignant pages of this journal that we dared write to Léon Bloy and to send him a small sum of money, following the example of certain correspondents named by him in it. His destitution was so great that the least gift answered an urgent need and was received with gratitude.

This acceptance of alms shocked us no more than his exaggerated language and harsh invectives. We felt that there was no more baseness at the bottom of these humiliations than coarseness in his violence. For us the deep purity and greatness of intention lighted up every page of the two books of Léon Bloy to which I have just referred.

"Providence is a pactolus of tears"

How could such a sentence have failed to overcome us? It was but a mystery to us, but it gripped our hearts. Among so many avowals drawn forth by misery it seemed to us to sum up all in a language that was as obscure and moving as very soft and very sorrowful music.

But there were, alas, on every page of this journal many other cries whose meaning was only too clear.

> Will God at last want me to live by my work like other laborers? This is a grace which I have so long begged with tears!

He wrote one book a year, but he never had more than a thousand copies bought, which gave him an annual revenue of five hundred francs! And he was married and the father of two children—two others, the eldest, being already dead as the result of poverty.

> January 1, 1901—Bills from the baker who has chosen this day with great tact. Such are our gifts. God sits at the table of my sufferings as though at a feast.
>
> February 23—We thought we were dying of hunger when ten francs arrived from a poor priest from whom I had asked nothing.
>
> November 6—Cold and dreary morning. Again the feeling of our endless misery.

And on the first of December he writes this heartrending line: "I sleep from misery."

> February 9, 1902—Letter from a poor person from whom I asked nothing and who sends me ten francs.

I continue to quote, but omitting the dates (this volume covers the years 1900-1904).

> Suffered this morning one of my most terrible crises of melancholy. . . .
>
> To a man for whom God died: I inform you that our friend Marchenoir [himself] is succumbing. The anguish of these last days can no longer be borne. He receives no news, no help, no sign of mercy. He hardly eats and then with tears. So great is the confusion that he thirsts for death. . . .
>
> Lord, I often weep. Is it from sorrow over my sufferings? Is it from joy in thinking of You? How to disentangle these things and not weep while trying to disentangle them?
>
> For some time I have not dared speak of my awakenings. It must be a heartache for God and His saints to see a soul suffer so greatly from the very first hour of each day.

Dear God, was it then so difficult to try to remedy such misery, to have pity on such tears, to console such sorrow? What follows under date of July 5, 1902, is poignant to read:

> One clings to hope as long as one can, but reason falters. One can no longer see. One is like the beasts groaning and crouching upon the earth. This torture is truly intolerable. If only one had a sign, a little help, a word of kindness. After going out to find a syphon of Seltzer water in the neighborhood, the old man who waited on me gave me a spray of lilies taken from a bunch he had

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just cut in his garden. The flowers were half faded, but what does that matter. It was hard for me to keep back my tears because I had the illusion or the evidence of an impulsion of goodness.

A sign, a little help, a moment of goodness. That we thought we could give to the unfortunate old writer. But could we give him more, the something which he really needed?

I remember having seen very clearly in my sleep what it is to help one's neighbor. I had the deep feeling—and I am distressed not to be able to express it—that there is only one help. It is the absolute gift of oneself, such as Jesus practiced it. One must allow oneself to be buffeted, spit upon, scourged and crucified. The commonplace expression *to cast oneself into the arms of someone* singularly clarifies this. All the rest is vanity.

Our first steps toward the unknown God

Filled with respect for this "Pilgrim of the Absolute," as he called himself, moved by his misery which seemed to us a great injustice, because a writer of such genius and so great an artist should have been able to live from his work, we decided to write him, very timidly, sending him a money order for twenty-five francs. We told him of our admiration but also of our remoteness from all religious faith.

This letter Léon Bloy received on June 20, 1905, the day on which the Catholic Church celebrated that year the feast of Saint Barnabas, companion of Saint Paul. The feast of Saint Barnabas is always celebrated the eleventh of June, unless a more important feast comes on the same date. In 1905 the eleventh of June fell on the Sunday of Pentecost. We had no idea of the honors paid in the Church to the saints in general, nor to Saint Barnabas in particular. But the fact had great importance for Léon Bloy, as we were to learn later.

Here is Léon Bloy's reply to our letter:

Paris, June 21, 1905.

To Jacques Maritain:

Messieurs,

Or Monsieur and Mademoiselle, because the name of Raissa surprises and disconcerts me—learn that I am extremely touched by your simple and affectionate letter.

It costs me nothing to acknowledge that the twenty-five francs were most welcome. That morning I had been forced to borrow a small sum from my barber for my wife and children's breakfast.

There is no presumption in expressing the hope for my friendship. If you are living souls, as I suppose to be the case, this sorrowful old man loves you already and would be happy to see you.

In the list of my books which you say you have read I do not see "Le Mendiant Ingrat" or "Mon Journal." It gives me pleasure to be able to present them to you and the mail will undoubtedly bring them to you tomorrow morning.

You will see that these two books together with "Quatre Ans de Captivité" form a trilogy.

It is the uninterrupted story of twelve years of my frightful life.

Read them then and tell me your impressions. I have almost no other wage but this: the suffrage of certain beings loved by God and who come to me.

In a month I will be fifty-nine years old and I am still searching for my bread, it is true; but I have nevertheless helped and consoled souls and that makes a paradise in my heart.

Yours,
Léon Bloy.

I inform you of the approaching publication of my new book, "Belluaires et Porchers," by Stock. It will probably go on sale this week.

Under the very date of June 20, Léon Bloy had noted in his journal:

Was it you, Saint Barnabas, who sent me these souls? Mysterious affinity between this Apostle and myself. Ever since the eleventh, the day of his feast, I have been surprised not to have felt his hand. Two beings (who soon became to us like neighbors in Paradise), a young man and his wife, suddenly offer themselves to become our friends, at the same time expressing their ambition to make themselves useful.

The reading of "Mendiant Ingrat" and "Mon Journal" only increased our admiration, our pity and our desire to know more of this great Poor Man and extraordinary writer.

On June 23 he wrote inviting us up to his home:

Come then, either Sunday or on any other day soon which suits you. You are awaited with love. Yours, Léon Bloy.

Directions: Take an omnibus from Odéon to Clichy and get off at Place Clichy. From there transfer to the Place Saint Pierre where you will find the funicular which brings you in five minutes to Sacré-Coeur. Ten steps, across the court of the Basilica, and you are at No. 40 on our street.

Two days afterwards we followed this route for the first time. How moved we were, how bold we felt and what mysterious hope dilated our hearts! Jacques himself has spoken of this first visit in his Preface to the "Letters" of Léon Bloy to his godchildren, and I can do no better than quote him here:

June 25, 1905, two children of twenty mounted the sempiternal stairway which leads up to Sacré-Coeur. They carried in themselves that distress which is the only serious product of modern culture, and a sort of active despair lightened only—they did not know why—by the inner assurance that the Truth for which they hungered, and without which it was almost impossible for them to accept life, would one day be shown to them. They were feebly upheld by a sort of esthetic morality in which the idea of suicide—after certain experiences that remained to be attempted and which were probably too beautiful to succeed—seemed to offer the sole escape. Meanwhile they had cleansed from their minds, thanks to Bergson, the scientific superstitions on which they had been nourished at the Sorbonne—although they were well aware that Bergsonian intuition was but a too flimsy refuge against the intellectual nihilism logically resulting from all modern philosophies. Otherwise they considered the Church, hidden from their sight by inept prejudices and by the outward appearance of many "right-thinking" people, as a rampart of the rich and powerful whose interest it was to maintain the darkness of the middle ages over minds. They were going toward a strange beggar who, distrusting all philosophy, cried divine truth from the housetops,

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and who while being a Catholic integrally obedient, condemned his times and those who have their consolation here below with far more liberty than all the revolutionaries in the world. They were terribly afraid of what they would meet—they had not yet been in the presence of literary men of genius; moreover it was something entirely different which they were now seeking. Not a shade of curiosity was in them, but another and graver feeling filled their souls: compassion for unsheltered greatness.

They crossed a little old-fashioned garden, then entered a humble house, its walls decorated with books and lovely pictures, and first encountered a great white figure of kindness, impressive in her peaceful nobility—this was Madame Léon Bloy. Her two little daughters, Veronique and Madeleine, gazed upon the visitors with great, surprised eyes. Léon Bloy seemed almost timid, he spoke but little and very low, trying to say something important to his young callers which would not disappoint them. What he uncovered for them cannot be told; the tenderness of Christian brotherhood, that trembling both of mercy and of fear with which a soul marked with the love of God is seized when it faces another soul. Bloy appeared to us as the contrary of other men, who hide grave failings in the things of the spirit and so many invisible crimes under a carefully maintained whitewash of the virtues of sociability. Instead of being a whited sepulchre, like the Pharisees of every time he was a fire-stained and blackened cathedral. The whiteness was inside, in the depth of the tabernacle.

Once the threshold of this house was crossed all values were displaced, as though by an invisible switch. One knew, or one guessed, that only one sorrow existed here—not to be of the saints. And all the rest receded into the twilight.

At a moment when everything filled us with despair we had placed our confidence in the unknown (which we did not think of in capital letters). We decided to do our best by existence in the hope that it would reveal new values to us, values which would give a sense to life—and here is what life brought us! First Bergson, and then Léon Bloy. Bergson who traveled uncertainly toward a far-off goal, but the light of which had already reached us—unrealized by us—like the rays of a star across a desert of unimaginable spaces; Léon Bloy who for many years had lived united to his God by an indestructible love which he knew to be eternal in its essence. Life cast him upon our shores like a legendary treasure—immense and mysterious.

Nevertheless we did not feel ourselves strangers in the house of Léon Bloy; our passage from his books to his life was without a break. All here was as he said: true the poverty, true the Faith, true his heroic independence. And he and his wife had adopted us from the first. We went down from the heights of the Rue de la Barre and the Sacré-Coeur enriched by a unique friendship, so gentle on the part of the violent man that all fear had left us on the day of our first meeting, and our respect became daring and familiar, like that of children who feel that they are loved.

Naturally having seen Léon Bloy we could no longer limit ourselves to a literary admiration, nor even to active compassion. We had to go further, we had to consider the principles, the sources, the motives of such a life. This time we were brought face to face with the question of God in all its force and urgency.

Chinks in the Armor

A few phenomena in today's Reich.

***By* Valeriu Marcu**

A SHORT TIME AGO, several members of the "Bible Students' Association," a nation-wide organization of resolute, religious men and women, were tried in Berlin. In America they are called "Jehovah's Witnesses." Twenty Bible Students were brought to court. They came from all corners of Germany: from Vienna at the gates of the Balkans as well as from Koenigsberg at the border of Russia. The trial lasted several days. It gave rise to so many and such varied rumors that the Reich officials felt compelled to publish brief, succinct reports of the proceedings.

The event caused a great sensation in Germany. Up until the day of this trial, the general and officially fostered view was that only the Jews were opposing the war and sabotaging the Führer's work. But there was not a single Jew among the indicted, and the verdict made it clear that most of them had admitted open war sabotage and regarded all war measures as a dagger pointed at their faith. Six Bible Students were sentenced to death, and fourteen others to long terms of penal servitude.*

Pacifist industrialists

But these men of faith are not the only offenders who have recently been brought before nazi courts. Certain persons who have presumably been en-

* The American headquarters of Judge Rutherford's fanatic sect claims 6,000 of their brethren are held in German concentration camps.

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riched and made happy by the régime have been feeling the rigors of persecution—leaders of heavy industry.

Among the iron and coal magnates the Gestapo discovered a plot whose threads led to a former National Socialist, a man who as much as anyone else had helped Hitler to seize power. Thyssen, who for many years had supported Adolf Hitler and the anti-democratic movement with large sums from his own pockets and collections among other leaders of heavy industry, fled at the outbreak of the war. The German police made a determined effort to get him back. There were three important reasons for recapturing him alive. First, Hitler regarded him as a traitor; second, Thyssen was in a position to make sensational revelations about the background of the nazi seizure of power; and third, the Berlin secret police was convinced that Thyssen's arrest would lead to the discovery of all the manipulations directed against the régime by the iron and coal industrialists.

After the fall of France, Berlin demanded Thyssen's extradition. But Thyssen thought he was secure, for high officials of the Pétain government had given him their word of honor that he would be left alone. They told him that France's honor forbade the Vichy government to deliver refugees. Three days after receiving these solemn assurances, Thyssen was abducted from his hotel in Cannes by two French and two German policemen who drove him to Vichy, whence he was taken across the demarcation line.

The capture of Thyssen and his detention by the Gestapo provoked great anxiety and restlessness in the German industrial circles, especially among the friends of Minoux, the former right hand man of Hugo Stinnes who had made a fortune during the inflation in the twenties. In spite of Schacht's attempts to play down the whole affair, Minoux was arrested a few weeks ago.

Schacht's own position remains ambiguous. Nominally, he is still a member of the Cabinet, but he has lost all influence in the government and his services are invoked only to rationalize certain nazi operations to foreign financiers. Schacht, who always passed as the financial guide of the régime, must remain in the government to give Hitler an ever ready opportunity to remind the world, that he, Hitler, and not Schacht, the cautious financial wizard, was always correct in his calculations. When Hitler returned to Berlin from his victorious campaign in the West, an eyewitness related to me, the Cabinet Ministers awaited him lined up in a double row at the station. Hitler's first words were addressed to Schacht: "You see; not you, but I was right."

Ernst Jünger, advocate of total mobilization

The desire for peace, widespread among intelligent Germans who believe in Germany's triumph but would like to see an early consolidation of present achievements, has recently begun to be shared by certain high nazi personalities, who had until now remained fanatically orthodox. These nazi officials had conceived the *Blitzkrieg* not as a lightning method of occupying foreign territories and a lightning destruction of enemy armies, but also as leading to a total *Blitz*-victory.

One of Hitler's most intimate friends, who equalled Rudolf Hess in his moral influence over the young and his power behind the throne, Ernst Jünger, has recently published a book advocating peace, printed in an edition of 30,000 copies. This outspokenly pacifist work by a man who had at the threshold of the war come out for total mobilization and total warfare, was, until a short time ago, to be seen in the show-window of every bookshop in the Reich.

A few years ago, during a visit to Jünger's modest Berlin apartment, I saw a letter from Hitler on his desk. In this letter the Führer reiterated his request that Jünger accept the post of deputy in the Reichstag. Jünger replied that he was more interested in writing one good sentence than in representing 60,000 imbeciles in parliament. Hitler did not take this reply amiss, for he well knew Jünger's great influence on nazi intellectuals and army officers.

Ernst Jünger served as an officer in the first World War, and when only twenty-one years old received the highest German decoration, "Pour le Mérite." In his early books he brilliantly discussed all the political methods—the fifth column methods—required to enlarge and strengthen the traditional and obsolete strategies of war. Today, the same man writes a pacifist book, though he continues to be a member of the German Army Command (on the title page of the book it is stated that it was finished "at General Headquarters.") It goes without saying that he does not write openly. The title is cryptic: "Before the Marble Steps." But, though disguised in fairy tale form, the book is an ode to freedom and peace, and in it the features of Hitler and his associates are depicted in a manner which even the blind can see.

This sensational work speaks of the Despot who hands out fear in small doses in order gradually to increase it. This fear, the Despot declares, is, next to ruse and violence, the strongest and most important weapon of the autocrat. Once fear has paralyzed his own and foreign countries, every serious resistance is broken, and the Despot is enabled to triumph almost without drawing his sword. The Despot, explains the author, also tries to create unrest everywhere, so as to appear later as savior. He is likened to an evil, diabolic physician who fosters his patient's diseases in order to justify the amputations he has in mind.

Ernst Jünger, who has spent many hours with

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the Führer and his associates lecturing them on the subject of total war, gives in this new book a detailed analysis of the dictator's character and the hidden motives that decide his actions. The Despot is shown as a man who has an ingrained hatred for everything peaceful: he abhors the plough, he abhors the corn, he is repelled by the harmonious process of growth, he even dislikes the tamed domestic animals. The dictator's heart, says Jünger, is gladdened only when weeds and moss spring up on the shambles of cities; only amidst the horrors of war is he at his ease, only amidst the panic of others does he feel happy. And when the "armed eagles" are hovering over the burning ruins of the great cities, the Dictator raises his glass. The more lurid the flames, the more he delights in his toast.

The forces of peace and the young nazis

Thousands of young Germans understood Jünger's book as a sign of an extraordinary conversion. Many anonymous nazis were encouraged in their feelings, which had secretly been the same as Jünger's. His book turned out to be not a literary, but a great and unexpected political event.

Young Germans who were fourteen when Hitler won the gamble of power were twenty at the outbreak of the war. For six years these young men had been systematically educated for war. They were not only taught how to handle arms—how to shoot and fly and parachute—but in a thousand ways they were inculcated with the true militaristic spirit. And beyond this they were enflamed with a fanatic will to light-hearted, conscienceless murder. They differ from the young men of all other countries in their attitude to cruelty. To them cruelty is the first moral, patriotic and military duty.

These boys between eighteen and twenty-two years of age are now the officers of the German army. Every evening, when the British radio broadcasts the names of the German war prisoners, one learns with amazement how young German officers are: sergeants of eighteen, lieutenants of twenty, captains of twenty-three and twenty-four are the rule.

Apart from the millions of these young men, the large masses of the German people were at first against the war, or preserved a skeptical, indifferent attitude toward it. Through his victories, Adolf Hitler has, to a certain extent, won these masses for his ideas. This comparatively bloodless war, which up to the Russian campaign, in a whole year cost fewer lives than a one-week offensive in the first World War, brought unprecedented triumphs which were associated with Hitler's banners. The mass production of victories, coupled with clever and unceasing propaganda, conjured up the vision of a world conquest without sacrifices. At the price of reduced butter rations, drastic curtailments of personal liberty and long food lines, the Germans have been led to the northern reaches of Scandinavia and approach ever nearer to the gates of India; they occupy the greatest and most beautiful world capitals, from Paris to Athens.

But it is wrong to imagine that war, even victorious war, can do away with the inner ferments, the inner processes of life. Before Hitler, Germany had been politically the most complex of countries; twenty-two parties were represented in the Reichstag, and there were innumerable religious sects. Today, the opposition does not manifest itself below, among the masses deluded by the brilliant victories, but at the top, within a spiritual minority formed in all the strata of the population moved by the voice of human conscience. That the opposition should occur among the upper strata is but logical: for today a great intellectual independence is needed for any understanding of Germany's real situation.

The thinking élite recruits its members both outside and inside the National Socialist Party. The channels leading from this small group to the masses are beginning to form. And this is an extraordinarily significant fact, the first symptom of a spiritual transformation and of a disintegration of morale. The process is not often noticed, for things of the spirit, moods and feelings cannot be photographed. Yet they are more important than battles, won or lost. On the outcome of *this* process, on its speed or slowness, the result of the war finally depends.

The Saga Island

By JOACHIM JOESTEN

THE THING I remember most vividly about that marvelous island which they call, very improperly, Iceland is not the Great Geyser, nor Vatnajökull, king of glaciers, nor any other of its thousand wonders of nature. It is the contrast between two buildings in Reykjavik, the capital, which I visited on the same day.

First I went to call on Hermann Jonasson, the Prime Minister, who received me in his office in the government building. This was an extremely modest, almost shabby affair, reminiscent of the town hall in some backwoods community—a rustic two-storied house, where visitors sat on wooden benches in narrow, crowded anterooms. The building, incidentally, used to be the city jail until the Icelanders decided they could do without one, as crimes and misdemeanors became less and less frequent on this happy island.

Then I made for the home of Einar Jonsson, the great sculptor, who is unquestionably Iceland's

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outstanding contribution to contemporary art. I had been to artists' homes before and knew how poor they generally were, even in countries much bigger and wealthier than Iceland. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I found myself outside a truly palatial building, one of the finest, most modern, to be seen anywhere in Reykjavik, and learned that this was the residence of Mr. Jonsson. Still more surprised was I when the artist told me that he did not work for a living, that he never even gave a thought to the question of whether this or that of his creations had sale value.

Indeed the same nation which so stintingly provides for its politicians that its prime minister is housed no better than a village mayor makes life easy for its artists and writers. In addition to a magnificent house which his fellow-citizens have presented to him, Mr. Jonsson has a liberal pension to live on which allows him to work free of care. And he is not the only person so endowed in Iceland. I know of at least two contemporary writers, Halldor Laxness and Gunnar Gunnarsson, who used to draw state pensions of 6,000 and 5,000 kronur a year (now somewhat reduced).

On the face of it one might think that it must be a very ungrateful business to be a writer in a language which is understood by no more than 118,000 people. Yet Icelandic literature has flourished for nearly a thousand years and occupies in the world of letters a place quite out of proportion with Iceland's population. There is many a nation ten times, or even a hundred times, as big which could not hold a candle to the wealth of immortal literature that has been produced on the Saga Island in the course of the centuries.

Icelandic literature is as old as the nation itself which created it. The island was settled by Norwegian Vikings in 871, and the earliest genuinely Icelandic poems, the so-called "Eddic lays," date from the beginning of the tenth century. These lays, which are composed in simple metres, reflect the life of the Viking age in all its manifestations; some of the most interesting tales of Scandinavian mythology are preserved in them. Simultaneously with them flourished the "drottkvaedi" or court-poetry through which the old-Icelandic bards ingratiated themselves with kings and earls.

With the decline of court poetry toward the end of the thirteenth century, Icelandic poets turned increasingly to religious motifs. This is the time of the "Saints' lays," of which the most famous is the poem "Lilja" (The Lily) by the great fourteenth century poet, Brother Eysteinn Asgrimsson; it is a song of praise to the Virgin. Second best poet in this field was Bishop Jon Arason, Iceland's last Catholic bishop, who was put to death at the beginning of the Reformation, in 1550. He is still revered as one of Iceland's greatest men and national heroes.

In the field of prose, the outstanding achievements of Icelandic literature are of course the Sagas, of which the earliest date from 1130. In these "Islendinga sögur" (Icelandic Sagas) an heroic age is preserved, in which blood feuds, manslaughter and terrible acts of vengeance were as much of a daily occurrence as they are an utter rarity in the peaceful Iceland of today.

Of the Icelandic bards who wrote these sagas, a good many had traveled far on the Continent of Europe, and one of them is credited with having coined a famous phrase which has acquired a new and strange significance these days. *"Lit ek of öxl til Kritar"* ("I look over my shoulder to Crete") he sang, meaning that for a Viking the distance between the two islands was negligible. Well perhaps Prime Minister Hermann Jonasson also "looked over his shoulder to Crete" when he called in American troops to forestall Adolf Hitler's repeating his sky-invasion of Crete on the big north Atlantic island.

Along with the saga writers and court scalds a number of great historians contributed to make the twelfth and thirteenth century the classic period of Icelandic literature. The greatest name in this line, a name worthy of figuring with the best history writers of ancient Greece and Rome, is that of *Snorri Sturluson* (1178-1241) whose immortal *"Heimskringla"* records the lives of Norse kings and earls from the earliest times up to his own generation.

Later, during the "five dark centuries," as the Icelanders somewhat hyperbolically call the period of Danish overlordship over their country (from 1381 to 1918), all forms of Icelandic literature declined notably; this period, however, saw the growth and compilation of the beautiful fairy-tales and other forms of folk-lore, in which Iceland is particularly rich.

Toward the middle of the nineteenth century a new movement became noticeable which has not yet been halted. Jonas Hallgrimsson, naturalist poet, Benedikt Gröndal and the Reverend Matthias Jochumsson are some of the outstanding names of the past century.

Among contemporaries, none has achieved greater fame than Einar Benediktsson, lyric and epic poet, of whom it has been said that if he had written in the language of a great nation, instead of in Icelandic, he would be world-famous by now. With him, Gudmundur Kamban, a noted dramatist, and the novelists Einar Hjörleifsson Kvaran, Gunnar Gunnarsson (who, alone among those mentioned, writes in Danish) and Halldor Kiljan Laxness have all become widely known outside the boundaries of their island; quite a few of them have had their works translated into foreign languages.

This is, of needs, an incomplete list, but even so it may well convey an idea of the extraordinary literary importance of a nation the total popula-

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tion of which does not exceed that of Kansas City or many another American medium-sized town.

There is something else that makes Icelandic writing unique in its kind: the language in which contemporaries like Benediktsson and Laxness write is still the same as that used by Snorri Sturluson and the oldest scalds. In the course of a thousand years, Icelandic has changed so little that any child of today can read without effort the great masters of the Viking age.

On this remarkable island, where even the remotest farm-house hidden away in the roadless interior has at least a shelf full of books, magazines and newspapers, illiteracy is unknown, and the man of letters is king.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IT IS to be hoped that the New York *Times* will follow up the article by Harold Callender in its August 3 issue by other articles in which Mr. Callender will supplement the information gathered by him in his four-month tour of South America, concerning the state of Catholic opinion relative to the United States. If it does so, the articles ought to supply more exact data, and should deal with one very important point which his first article deals with merely inferentially, namely, the measure in which he thinks Catholic influence to be decisive, or at least very powerful, in determining the policy of South America, or at least of that continent's greater nations, toward the United States, and more especially toward the anti-nazi policy of the United States.

In summary, Mr. Callender's first article decidedly gives the impression that the prevailing Catholic opinion in the most influential quarters of all the ten republics of South America is very suspicious of the influence of the United States, and "in some cases," left unspecified, he discovered "a leaning toward the totalitarian side." In general, he reports, "accumulating evidence, supplied by Catholics, indicated that these suspicions [of leading Catholics in influential positions] were so deep and so widespread as to constitute in nearly every country a considerable obstacle to Pan American understanding and consequently to collective defense." Mr. Callender declares that there is no convincing evidence that a majority of Catholics in any given country are hostile to the United States. But "in South America it is not majorities that matter, save perhaps in the very long run."

Valuable, however, as news reports such as Mr. Callender's may be in some respects, as far as pointing out the problems involved, are concerned, unless in future articles the writer is able to go deeper into the subject than in the article already published, such reporting is not very helpful in aiding us to understand the problems. Mr. Callender in his tour throughout South American "consulted cardinals, priests, monks and outstanding lay leaders of the only important church in South America. All, without exception, confirmed the existence of the suspicions mentioned and generously devoted considerable time in helping the visitor to understand them."

He found, at the same time, that there were numerous Catholics who understand and oppose totalitarianism and who "long for better relations with the United States." Indeed, these Catholics, he thinks, "form a potent force in South America. But this article will deal with the less friendly, and the reasons for their unfriendliness as elucidated by Catholics of both camps." Presumably, if Mr. Callender continues his study of the subject, he will give his readers a summary of the views of that other group. It is a pity that more space was not devoted to it in the first article, particularly in view of the startling nature of the headlines placed over the article, flatly declaring that "Latin Catholic" are "Suspicious of United States," and similar statements, without any qualifications.

Generally speaking, the *Times* correspondent found that dread of the "anti-clerical" character of United States influence, and resentment of Protestant missionary efforts financed and directed from the United States, and the "left" influence in economic and social affairs exerted by the United States in South America, seemingly supported by the aid given by the United States to such anti-clerical leaders as Calles in Mexico some years ago, and by the support given by Masonry in the United States to the decidedly anti-clerical Masonry of South America, which plays a political part there much in the same way as Masonry did in pre-Vichy France, constituted the chief reasons for Catholic coolness toward and suspicions of the United States.

It is to be hoped that Catholics in the United States who really know South America and its culture and history more thoroughly than such knowledge can be readily acquired in a newspaper reporter's tour will take up the subject and enlighten the public of both North and South America as to the real extent of such suspicions, their justification, if any, and what can best be done to remove them or, at least, to alleviate their influence.

Communications

CONVERSATION IN MOSCOW

Bay Shore, Long Island.

TO the Editors: At a time when the gates of Russia, so long locked on both sides, are at last opening, and the Russian people are beginning to be accepted again as human beings, the article by Mr. Leddihn in your current issue seems to be singularly inopportune. We are not told how long ago Mr. Leddihn had his feverish and highly symbolic encounters with Russians, but his notes on them breathe hatred and scorn not only of communism but also of the Slavs, which perhaps would not have been modified by later or wider experience. The individual Christian knows that poverty ought not to be the cause of his own unhappiness, and he may even come to look with fortitude on cancer as only one of many possible causes of his death. But the definitely unchristian assumption that poverty and disease are inevitable, and even

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perhaps good for the souls of others, has been the chief cause of the rise of communism. . . . It is not a joke that the Russian people, in the first twenty years of literacy, should prefer museums and discussion clubs to roller coasters. Finally, I am surprised that an accomplished linguist like Mr. Leddihn should get so much amusement from Russian patronymics. As a matter of fact the actor Komisarshevsky might be interested to run upon a name like "Councilman"; Philosofov and Amphiteatrov might identify themselves in a general way with our "Love-goods" and "Halls." The old Slavonic word "Nyémyetz" for "German" is sometimes said to mean "dumb," and brings up a picture of primitive Slavonic and German tribes meeting for the first time and listening to each other with incredulous amazement. But we call ourselves "Christians," and mean by that name that all men are brothers. If some of us are without souls, let God be the judge.

MARION JANE CARROLL.

RUSSIA AT WAR

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I read with absorbing interest the two articles in your paper of July 25th, "Russia at War," by Helen Iswolski, and "The War Behind the War," by Donald Attwater. Both authors have written with so much calm thought, intelligence and truth that THE COMMONWEAL is to be commended for their publication. I hope that Catholics will realize the importance of an intellectual paper like THE COMMONWEAL, that is so fair, and so *un*prejudiced in its articles.

ALICE E. WARREN.

Points & Lines

English Catholics and Russia

THANKS to slow mails, we have only just received copies of the English Catholic press of late June and early July, and so it has not hitherto been feasible to reproduce English Catholic comment on Britain's new Russian ally. A cross-section of such comment is here reprinted. The *Catholic Herald* (July 4) devotes a front-page box to Cardinal Hinsley's answer to a member of Parliament:

> Our country with our allies is fighting against the immediate nazi attempt to subjugate Europe. No one who knows how anti-Christian the ideas and practices of the nazis are will for one moment be deceived by Hitler's latest pose as the champion of European civilization, or think that it has become in any way less vital to resist his attempt to enslave the continent.

The same paper reproduces a number of foreign comments on Hitler's invasion of Russia. One of the most interesting is from the Portuguese Catholic paper *Novidades:*

> How can we consider this a conflict developing between two antagonistic worlds when we all know that the seed of evil has been carried without hesitation from one side to the other and that both have combined in acts that our morality and our feelings repudiate, and that all the time they have committed together deeds of injustice and violence which we have never ceased to condemn.

There are also quoted with emphasis two paragraphs from a radio address to the USA by Dr. Heenan:

> Suppose that you let it be known that you were going to take a firm stand against all gangsters. One day your house and the houses of some of your neighbors were attacked by a gang of ruffiians armed with bombs and submachine guns. Even after the homes of all your neighbors had been despoiled, you decided to continue the struggle alone. That was a matter of principle. Now further down the road lives a man whom you have every reason to suspect of being in league with the gangsters. In fact, you have seen him give the gangsters every encouragement. Suddenly the gangsters fall out with their friend. Would you consider it hypocritical or insincere if you not only continued to maintain your motive for fighting but even backed up the gangsters' former friend and helped him to win his end of the battle? . . . There are some devils which are exorcised only through suffering. It may be that in God's Providence the sufferings of war will restore to the Russian leaders and people the Christian inheritance which was once their proud possession. There was room for reform in Russian Christianity, and perhaps after wanderings in the desert they will build in Russia a cleaner and newer tabernacle.

But the policy of the paper is best expressed in a leading editorial:

> It was inevitable that a number of correspondents should have written in protest against the policy of active collaboration with Soviet Russia within the military field for the purpose of defeating the nazis. One of these protests is directed especially at the lead given by the Sword of the Spirit in a recent letter to *The Times*, wherein the point is made that the communist question is for the moment an irrelevancy. . . . We have no reason whatever for supposing that a surviving Stalin will give up the Bolshevik plans for undermining the civilization of the West, and we are, in fact, engaged in trying to destroy the force which has for the past few years held him in check. If we succeed in doing this—and doing it now in partnership with the Soviet—we shall obviously have opened the way again for Bolshevik aggression. All this, we think, must be borne very clearly in mind, especially by Christians, but it does not alter the truth that the *immediate* danger today is nazism and not communism. Communism, however, remains most relevant, and all the more relevant in that there will be a conspiracy to persuade us that Stalin and Molotov are changed men and that the Soviet is now fit to fight for the common ideal. But submission to nazism is no way of repelling communism. In our view, then, we have no choice but to continue the fight against nazist aggression by every legitimate means in our power until we are satisfied that a just and lasting settlement with Germany and Western Europe can be reached. To refuse to make the accidental common action against Hitler as efficient as possible through the coordination of the forces against him is just foolish. So long as we are strong, absolutely resolute in our aims, and on our fullest guard against the ultimate aims of Bolshevism, we need not fear the immediate consequences of such collaboration. The first danger lies not in Stalin, but in ourselves. There are powerful elements in this country—by no means necessarily communist in name—who will do everything possible to convert the military partnership into the beginnings of a common ideology.

The London *Tablet* (June 28) has the following comments in its weekly survey:

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> Mr. Churchill did well to declare the Government's policy of British aid for Russia before a campaign for such aid had time to start. . . . Our national unity has been spared the strain which such a campaign would have put on it, with its revival of wholly untrue and misleading language about the great Workers' Republic. As it is, there can be no occasion for such a campaign. . . . It will be a good test of the sincerity of the Soviet in accepting collaboration with the Allies, to see whether they withdraw their claim to that part of Poland which they seized twenty months ago. . . . The Supreme Soviet Council should solemnly repudiate every historic partition of Poland, as it did in September, 1918. . . . The least the Russians can do is to release immediately the three hundred thousand Polish soldiers whom they hold as prisoners. The British Government could press for this step to be taken at once. But the Polish State must be restored. Not until it is restored, and we have so fulfilled the pledge for which we went to war in 1939, shall we be able to claim that we have successfully ended the war. Whether we are able to restore it or not must be for us the criterion of victory or defeat. . . . In case there should be a tendency, now that the Russians are fighting the same enemy as ourselves, to discover that their campaign against religion was merely a passing phase which has already disappeared, it should be noted that so recently as June 17 the Moscow home service broadcast a violent speech on the necessity for increasing work for the eradication of religion.

The *Tablet* further says in its leading editorial:

> Mr. Churchill acted with great promptitude on Sunday, announcing that while he unsaid nothing of what he has said against communism we shall assist this Russian resistance. Very neatly, in his picture of the Russian country women, praying in the day of desolation and destruction, he indicated, what we too easily forget, that this new cataract of suffering falls on millions of ordinary, unpolitical, poor Russians, and we must not lose sight of them, and think only and always about Stalin and his party. The fact that the Moscow Government has been attacked has not changed its own record or character in the least, nor are its members suddenly more reliable. . . . Stalin's outlook and policy are quite irreconcilable with the ideals of liberty and civilized order for which we are fighting, and there can be no question of any alliance. But there is today a great common object, the defeat of a man and a system which is much more efficient than Stalin's communism, and much more of an immediate danger to us all. We must keep rigidly to the military common object, and have nothing to do with any temptations to pretend that what divides us from the Soviet Government is a less profound and unbridgeable gulf than it is. Because Russia is far away, and because Britain has had no taste of Red revolution, we too commonly underestimate the Continental dread of militant communism. From Turkey to Scandinavia and Spain, the same feeling is alive, so that even peoples who have no love at all for cruel and arrogant Germans, consider German overlordship the lesser evil. The German Catholics, for example, with no illusions about the deep, malignant, anti-Christian purposes of the nihilistic nazi movement, consider it better to be under enemies who seek to recondition you, than under enemies whose violence is more immediate. . . . We should do well to make it exceedingly plain—Mr. Churchill could do it—that there will be no interregnum of anarchy in Europe when Hitler's power is broken, that the Germany Army is not the only bulwark between the Continent and Red ruin, as the Germans pretend, but that the very weapons with which we shall triumph, the immense air and land forces of the gathering Anglo-American combination, will bring order as well as food to a liberated Europe.

The *Weekly Review*, formerly *GK's Weekly*, (July 3) while not explicitly a Catholic paper, represents the point of view of a considerable group of English Catholic intellectuals. Here is its editorial comment on the subject:

> A great deal has been written during the last week about the entry of the USSR into the war, but very little notice has been taken of the fact that this was the last thing that the Soviet Government wanted to happen. War, as has been said before in these pages, is a great revealer of reality, and there are few things that Moscow desired less than that realities should become known. It is almost certain that Stalin would have gone to almost any lengths of submission to Prussian demands rather than be involved in a major war. From these facts two important truths arise: first, that the Soviet policy has in no way changed owing to the attack by Prussia. It is still as anxious to destroy civilized government, wherever found, as it has always been. Secondly, that the actual conquest of Russia was considered, not only possible, but absolutely essential by the Prusisan General Staff to the success of their war effort. This latter point again suggests two things: that the acquisition of certain supplies in large quantities are so imperative to the Prussian war machine that occupation is the only solution; and that the conquest of Russia is the only means by which our hold on the Suez can be broken. There can be little doubt that Berlin would much prefer to end the war without making an expensive attempt to invade England.

The same weekly features an article by Anatole V. Baikaloff, who writes quite frequently for English Catholic periodicals:

> Stalin and his henchmen cannot be trusted. When things go badly with them they may pretend to turn Russian nationalist, to make patriotic speeches and to publish patriotic articles, but they will always remain communists. The bone-breaking somersaults which Harry Pollit and his friends have performed in this country during the last two years are typical of communist treachery. What would happen should the Red Army be defeated: I visualize two possibilities. Stalin may ask for an armistice and place himself at the mercy of the vanquisher. He will justify the sacrifice of Russian national interests by the same argument which Lenin used when he meekly submitted to the "kick of General Hoffman's boot." In an interview with the *Daily News* correspondent (March 22, 1918), Lenin said: "The task of the Soviets is to hold on till the exhaustion of the belligerent groups of European capitalism provokes revolution in all countries." The other possibility is that Hitler would decide to finish the job and destroy the Soviet régime root and branch. In that case the Ukraine, the Caucasus and other provinces of Russia will be detached from the body of Russia and a number of subservient puppet governments will be put in power. It might happen that the Red Army would be able, should it adopt the methods of elastic defense, to bring the fighting to a standstill before the winter (which sets in late in October) makes large-scale warfare of movement difficult. Should this happen, Stalin would be forced to make extensive political and economic concessions to the Russian people else his government would be overthrown and replaced by a military dictatorship imbued with the true Russian national spirit. I think that possible because the strain of war conditions on the overworked Soviet economic and political system will prove too great without wholehearted support of the whole nation. By methods of terrorism it would be impossible to maintain the morale of the army during the winter and continue the war in the spring. Should Stalin and his crowd refuse to budge, a strong man, a true Russian national leader, would, I trust, make his appearance. History knows many such miracles.

Finally, the editor prints with approval the following "exhortation" from one of his readers:

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The anti-Moscow policy appears to me ruled out for the time being. In my view it was frequently irrelevant and always too narrow. It brought you strange allies. All the rich everywhere, the big corporations, the powerful Jews, Press lords, nazi gangsters who hate religion and fascist scoundrels whose only use for religion is as a mask . . . they were *all with you and prepared to use you.* Now, my simple suggestion is, stand out as the friend and protector of the oppressed everywhere—irrespective of race or religion or nationality—and attack their oppressors likewise irrespectively. Your enemy then will not be just some doctrine or slogan (like atheism or communism and the like)—but *people* and *organizations* who trample on the poor wherever and whatever they may be and however God-fearing they proclaim themselves. Your enemies will be selected for their deeds and not for their pious or impious words. They may even be churches if these are rich and oppressive as too often in the past they have been: alas! But your paper may then become the salt of the journalistic world in England and your friends will be the needy and the downtrodden, everywhere and, incidentally, all true Christians.

The Catholic Gazette (July), organ of Father Owen Dudley's Catholic Missionary Society, makes the following comments:

"When rogues fall out, honest men have their due" is a time-worn saying, but embodies a truth which time cannot wear away. . . . It is a patent historical fact that the government of Russia has for some twenty years been breathing out fire and slaughter against all its people who opposed the pressure of materialistic communism; especially against religious people who had no option but to oppose it. It does appear, indeed, that recently the Soviet régime has been toned down, so as to make grey patches amidst the blackness; for which various reasons have been assigned: as, for instance, that the Soviet, having disintegrated organized religion, can now afford to leave it alone—at least *pro tem.* Or, again, that it is a sheer impossibility to crush out religion and certain human things (like life-long marriage) from a people so staunchly and deeply religious as the Russian peasant. But all this does not change the fact that the history of the Soviet, as the history of the nazi, is a history of gangsterdom—the violent coercion of the many by a powerful few. The nazi clique is at present the one which has caused, and is causing, the greatest havoc in Europe and even in the world in general, and which constitutes the greatest menace to Britain and the Commonwealth. Hence the conclusion that, at the moment, this major and immediate menace must be opposed to the utmost, even though this involves fighting alongside the remoter menace of the Soviet. So while our present policy of action is clear enough, we must beware of becoming so muddleheaded as to paint one gangster with the glorious colors of pure-hearted heroism, the chivalric defender of liberty, merely because another gangster has attacked him. It is heartening, however, to be able to find two goods arising out of this clash between two evil agents. First, the weakening of both, and especially of the immediately devastating one, the nazi. Secondly, the avowal by our Premier and by our Secretary for Foreign Affairs that communism, the system of official Russia, is definitely repudiated, and that we are in no way committed to it by the recent political action of promising military aid. Catholics, and in fact all who profess the Christian name, can make no mistake by praying with all their heart that this avowed attitude towards a system essentially evil may remain unswayed by future diplomacy. The present development may, for all we know at present, be the beginning of the liberation of Russia; and if Russia becomes the instrument of effectually weakening the nazi machine, it may also be the beginning of the liberation of the Germanies.

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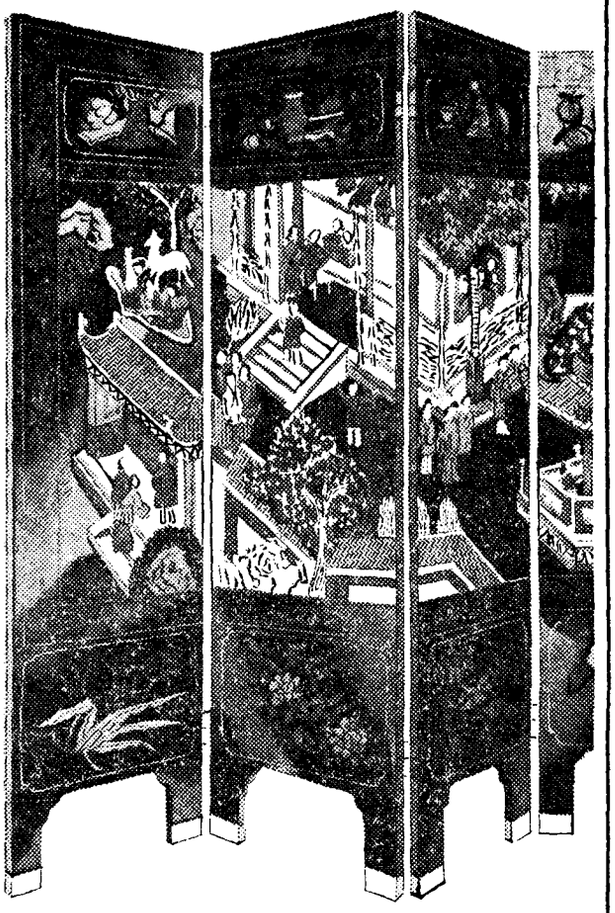

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The Screen

"I Am Sick of Four Walls and a Ceiling"

WHEN cinema moves out into the open spaces, it comes right into its own. It started with "The Great Train Robbery" and "The Eagle's Nest" and loves to go back to the great out-of-doors for its excitement. Unfortunately in also going back to the novels of Harold Bell Wright and Peter B. Kyne, as it does this week, it returns to the out-moded banalities that those authors were getting rich on some thirty years ago. But, while sophisticated urbanites sneer at the sentiment of movies filled with the simple homespun philosophies and the goings-on of backwood folks, they seem to find these films entertaining; and rural audiences eat them up.

Well pleased with the profits made several years ago on the theatrically rustic "Trail of the Lonesome Pine," which won acclaim for its natural outdoor background in glowing technicolor, Paramount hopes to do a repeat business with its *"Shepherd of the Hills."* Again employing bright-hued technicolor to emphasize the beauties of the Ozark country, Director Henry Hathaway again guides a group of competent film stars through another naïve, sentimental, dated melodrama. No changes that Grover Jones and Stuart Anthony made in the screenplay which they wrote from the Wright novel could disguise the obvious story or make living characters out of the shallow, stereotyped rôles. Even Betty Field, John Wayne, Beulah Bondi, Samuel S. Hinds, Harry Carey and Marjorie Main could not bring these flat symbols of people to life. When Stranger Carey appears among these Ozark mountaineers and superstitious hill folk, he is unwelcome until he performs so much goodness that he comes to be known as the Shepherd. He has many suspicious and tough individuals to win over: Young Matt who is out gunning for his father whom he has never seen, but who deserted Matt's mother before she returned to the hills to die; Aunt Mollie, a vicious she-devil filled with hatred and revenge; a pretty young girl who loves Matt but deplores his oath to kill his pappy; blind Granny Becky who regrets gaining her sight and seeing all the miseries that these folk have; hunchbacked Pete, who "ain't right" in the head; and a whole passel of gun-totin' roughnecks who make liquor and fight. Well, this good Shepherd is sure awful good—going around healing folks and being kind. Of course you know in the first ten minutes who he'll turn out to be. And he does; but not before a lot of fast melodramatics occur to get rid of the terrible curse that's on the Matthews kin. If the story and the overdone vernacular get to be too much for you (and I hear that some Missouri citizens who saw the film complained that it is unfair to local characters), you can concentrate on the scenery which is mighty purty.

A picture like *"The Parson of Panamint"* is likely to fool you. It has no big names so you don't expect much; and then you're rather pleased at its simple back-to-earth qualities. A few of the less unscrupulous citizens in Panamint, during the old days when gold mining was making the town flourish, thought that since the community has a church it ought to have a preacher. So Charlie Ruggles, the town's pert mayor who first discovered gold in these parts, is commissioned to hunt up a young one who won't be too meticulously snoopy and who will bring brotherly love to this brawling mining community. What success this picture has is due to Ruggles for his likable personality and infectious humor and to Philip Terry who plays the rôle of the young parson with sensible, sincere, mannish frankness. It doesn't take the newly ordained parson long to discover he has a job on his hands in this wild western town. His greatest problems are not with the tough customers, but with the holier-than-thou pillars who are getting wealth out of the gold mine in which working conditions are unsafe. Parson Terry soon has Mayor Ruggles, Dance Hall Girl Ellen Drew, Saloon Keeper Joseph Schildkraut and a couple of standard reprobates on his side. But Producer Harry Sherman and Director William McGann must have decided that the picture needed more pep than just a parson's horse sense and ability at converting folk. So then the fancy hokum breaks loose (the original is a Kyne novel). In the melodrama that follows, the parson accidentally kills a man, is found guilty by a fixed jury. The mean-minded, hypocritical parishioners lead the lynching party to string him up. Then of course Ruggles saves the day.

For cinemagoers who want to take their out-of-door films neat and without any fiction to clutter up the grandeur of nature, I heartily recommend the US Department of Agriculture's short, *"Harvests for Tomorrow."* Its stunning photography sings with the beauty of the New England scene: trees and hills and gardens, old houses, churches, cemeteries, villages, farms, sheep on hilltops, clouds and cows in clover. Its commentary is recited by Frank Craven who could be continuing his tale about "Our Town," except that Mr. Craven makes no appearance in this documentary film. For more than 300 years the land has fed the New Englanders from its richness. It was good land—rocky, but good. We cut the trees and built our houses, barns and churches. We have had more than 300 harvests since we first came to this country; and we built a grist of things out of that top soil. We worked the land pretty hard and we invented machines to speed its flow of goodness. But we gave nothing back to replace what we took; and brush and scrub take over when we let the earth run down. Now we no longer expect it to take care of itself; we restore lime and phosphorous to the land. Lime, phosphorous and other minerals are returned to the good earth to prepare it for the harvests of tomorrow. This is the sermon that accompanies this cinematic idyl. But because the film has a message, don't let that frighten you away from seeing its fine photography. I have heard that because of its local problem "Harvests for Tomorrow" will be shown only in the East. This is regrettable because city and farm folk all over the country are interested in this phase of the Northeast and in the restoration of land. Although Edgar Peterson has not directed as thrilling a documentary as "The River," and although the script is too repetitious, movie-goers throughout the country should be given the privilege of enjoying the beauties of this pastoral.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Books of the Week

1870-1941

Democratic France. Richard Walden Hale, Jr. Coward-McCann. $3.50.

AFTER the collapse of the Second Empire at Sedan and the proclamation of the Republic which ended a year ago, the French began to erect statues of a woman in their public squares as symbols of their somewhat paradoxical democracy. The lady was tall, full-breasted, almost Gibsonian, wearing a Greek *peplos* and Phyrgian cap; there are two gigantic examples in Paris, Place de la République, Place de la Nation, and a third, the gift of France, in New York Harbor. She was called Marianne by her friends, and the *gueuse* (tramp) by her enemies, of whom there were many—among the generals who defended her, the clergy who prayed for her and even the politicians who wrote her constitution. She endured seventy years, and in a timely, readable and in spots vivacious book, Mr. Hale has attemtped to paint her portrait as sympathetically as possible.

The historian, who sub-titles his history "From Sedan to Vichy," is confronted with three main difficulties. (1) The multitude of picturesque characters and the diverting myths he is bound to discard. (2) The fact that his exposition of contemporary France must go back farther than 1871, to 1789 if not earlier. And (3) the strongly emotional coloring that suffuses all French history from the Revolution onward, a coloring to be seen in the violently opposed attitudes toward Marshal Pétain's government at the present moment in this country.

Mr. Hale's summary of French democracy as it entered the last decade of the century is worth quoting if only as a sound sample of his interpretive method: "A Frenchman went as a child to a state school, used to worship in a church the state paid for, and later had his church kept out of his life by the state. . . . His life was a constant state interference, but on the other hand, he was free as no American was. His press could, in time of peace, tell him almost anything. . . . This was the paradox of French democracy—it was the democratic control of a dictatorship."

Such a paradox, of course, veritably cried out for a series of little revolutions, of which the Dreyfus affair in the nineties was the most critical and far-reaching in effect. Here Mr. Hale seems to incline toward the accurate view that Dreyfus himself was a completely insignificant, and possibly guilty, individual, transformed into a monstrous symbol by two bitterly hostile forces, representing the conservative Republic on one hand, and the radical Left on the other. To this very day, much is made of the alleged disloyalty on the part of priest and soldier to the French democratic ideal. But little is said of that betrayal of national unity by the radicals from Combes to Léon Blum, which began when the Revolution made war on the priests in 1792 and ended when the Maginot line collapsed in 1940. Free Masons and subscribers to *La Croix* snarled over dead bones between Sedan and Vichy, enabling Hitler to leap upon the living body of the real France only a year ago.

It is wholly impossible, as Mr. Hale intimates in his last chapter, to allot the blame for that easy rape at this stage of the story. Was it the fault of the Masons, the generals, the employers, the workmen, the politicians, the

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priests? Perhaps it was a little the fault of them all, and not the least of those natural nazis like Maurras and Déat who take to Hitlerism as instinctively as a Beacon Hill banker or Harvard poet would in this other "democracy" of ours. *De te fabula;* but Mr. Hale's book is, alas, no fable.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

WAR

Bomber's Moon. Negley Farson. With 48 Illustrations by Tom Purvis. New York. Harcourt. $2.50.

NEGLEY FARSON is an American journalist who seems to have spent so much time in England that he now writes with a distinct English accent. He has, however, turned out a very readable, stimulating book on London during and in between the air raids, and Tom Purvis has illustrated it with better-than-fair line drawings. If all the books we are now getting on how to lose a war gracefully are as good as "Bomber's Moon" (nice title, by the way), then we have been singularly blessed.

One thing Farson proves conclusively is that the stubborn courage of the bombed Londoner isn't just propaganda, or even the routine bravado that war correspondents have identified with every bombed (and doomed) capital of Europe since the war began. Apparently it is quite real—a newsworthy display of sheer guts and fighting spirit that cannot be explained purely on the ground of a people at bay, battling for their lives.

Farson attributes part of it to the traditional nervelessness of the British people, which in turn he ascribes to the peculiarly even quality of their history—that is, the fact that they haven't been invaded since the eleventh century, have had few civil wars or revolutions, have always been fairly prosperous, etc. How much it is this and how much it is the natural reaction of a proud, conquering race that sees itself being pushed out of the No. 1 spot—all this would be hard to judge exactly.

It is only natural, too, that the reality of sudden death should have quickened the religious impulse in wartime Londoners. One church took advantage of this by putting out a large sign that read: "If Your Knees Knock, Kneel on Them." Church crypts have come in handy as air raid shelters, and many ministers and priests have distinguished themselves and their Christian faith by their services to the homeless and distressed.

Negley Farson has written a good book—a book full of the drama, tragic, comic, and just plain glorious drama, that marks off those men and women everywhere who have stood up under a terrible ordeal and demonstrated once again the rare and mysterious fact of human heroism.

JOHN C. CORT.

Cross Winds of Empire. Woodbern E. Remington. Day. $3.00.

COLORFUL impressions of Malaysia (the Philippines, Indo-China, the East Indies, the Federated Malay States, etc.) which at times reach lyrical heights. The cumulative effect of the author's sketchy descriptions of scores of striking Oriental scenes is a strong one. Greatest emphasis is on the Philippines, which he ardently believes we should not abandon to economic disaster, internal disorders, if not seizure by the Japanese, to please American sectional and big business interests. The book ends in Manila, in fact, on a dread note of foreboding. A highly successful effort to convey the sights, sounds, odors, flavor of the inscrutable East.

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The Inner Forum

BUSINESS and professional men, laborers, farm folk, educators, clerks, men of every walk of life, are to be found in prayer, on the last Saturday of each month, in the churches where Nocturnal Adoration services are held.

The American Society for Nocturnal Adoration is an organization of Catholic laymen with headquarters in New York City, and branches in many dioceses of the United States. It was formed for the express purpose of paying homage to the Eucharistic Savior by nocturnal adoration. In most localities where there are branches of the society, the devotion begins at 10 p.m. and is held each hour until dawn—with different groups of men watching before the altar for a period of an hour. However, in some places where the society has been recently organized, there are just two hours of prayer: from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. and from 11 p.m. to 12 p.m.

The Office of the Most Blessed Sacrament comprises the main part of each hour's service. Preceding the office, the members recite the Evening Prayer, the Act of Adoration and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. At the conclusion of the office, the closing prayers and an Act of Reparation are said, as well as prayers for the dead. In some localities, there is a short sermon by the director, followed by Benediction. Others observe a period of silent prayer, leaving each member free to pray as he pleases. In still other places, a nocturnal Mass is celebrated, with members receiving Holy Communion.

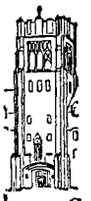
In 1881 Dr. Thomas Dwight, a professor at the Harvard Medical School, attended a night of adoration in the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires in Paris. He was so impressed with the service that he received permission to organize in Boston the first branch in the United States. On Holy Thursday in 1883 a second Nocturnal Adoration Society was formed in the Church of St. Ann at Baltimore by the convert priest, the Reverend William Bartlett. The New York branch of the society came into existence in 1903 and has been conducted ever since by the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament in St. Jean Baptiste Church.

In Chicago, over a thousand men attend the monthly meeting of the society in the Church of Notre Dame. After the office of the Blessed Sacrament nocturnal Mass is celebrated, with the members reading aloud the prayers of the Holy Sacrifice from their Missals. They receive Holy Communion in a body.

St. Wenceslaus Church of Wilson, Kansas, located in the heart of a farming district, has Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament beginning at 10 p.m. Adoration is carried on continuously until the 7 o'clock Mass. Men of the country parish volunteer to form a constant band of worshippers. Some of them come fifteen miles in the middle of the night and the early morning hours to attend the devotion.

The Baltimore society attends Mass in a body and receives Holy Communion on the fifth Sunday in each quarter (which is known as Nocturnal Sunday), so that the members who attend the different services may get to know one another.

The recently organized Nocturnal Society of Dubuque, Iowa, has found that attendance was greatly stimulated



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Next Week

SO THE NEGRO WANTS WORK, by George Streator, informally but eloquently raises the question as to the extent to which the Negro tenth of our population shares in the boom brought on by industrial expansion for national defense. "Defense from what?" asks Mr. Streator.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL IN LONDON, by D. H. Moseley, a stirring account of the last days of the English Jesuit poet-martyr who "arrived in London from Rome in July, 1586· the summer of the Babington Plot, and two years after the passing of the statute 27 Eliz.c.2, which made it an act of treason punishable with death for a native born subject of Queen Elizabeth, ordained since the beginning of her reign, to remain in England longer than forty days."

"POLITIX" IN DAKOTA by T. D. Lyons, another fascinating bit of the history of the great West, dealing in large part with personal observations of a William Jennings Bryan presidential campaign. An unforgettable picture of the man "with the golden voice, with its sonorous swell that aloft and clear was sent to the last verge of the vast audience."

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when the policy was adopted of having the services in a different parish at each meeting.

The founding of the Nocturnal Adoration dates back to 1592. The reign of Pope Clement VIII was troubled with heresies, especially in France, and with the menace of the Turk. Night prayer by men was begun, and as the devotion grew in power, the strength of the enemies of the Church waned. In 1810, four men, under the leadership of Canon Sinibaldi, formed the Nocturnal Society in Rome.

A Nocturnal Society was organized in France during the turmoil of 1848 when revolutionaries swarmed the streets of Paris and bloodshed was a common occurrence. Herman Cohen, a brilliant Jewish pianist and a convert to Catholicism, had an intense devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. With 19 associates, he formed a Nocturnal Adoration Society whose members pledged themselves to pray nightly before the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires.

Herman Cohen became a Discalced Carmelite, taking the name of Father Augustine Marie du Saint Sacrament. In 1863 he went to England and with the cooperation of Cardinal Wiseman started a Nocturnal Society in a little chapel in Kensington. In 1928 Cardinal Bourne set aside a former Wesleyan chapel in Westminster as the principal London center for Nocturnal Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Today, amid the horror of night bombings and the booming of anti-aircraft guns, Nocturnal Adoration is still observed in England.

The spiritual advantages of membership in the Nocturnal Adoration Society are numerous and include plenary and partial indulgences for all those who, having received the Sacraments, shall pray for the intention of the Pope and comply with the required obligations. Members of the society pray for those whom pain prevents from sleeping. They pray especially for people who are at the point of death. They pray, likewise, for the embattled people of the world; for the men and women and children who are the victims of death bombs from enemy planes; for the airmen whose flaming ships fall like comets from the darkened skies; for the sailors who are sucked under the waves when their ships stagger and sink beneath the impact of a torpedo. AULEEN BORDEAUX EBERHARDT.

CONTRIBUTORS

Raissa MARITAIN contributes a portion of a chapter from her forthcoming autobiography; she is the wife of Jacques Maritain and an author in her own right. Her works include "Lettre de Nuit," "Le Vie Donnée," "Le Prince de ce Monde," "L'Ange de l'École" (translated); and in collaboration with her husband: "De la Vie d'Oraison," and "Situation de la Poésie." She has also made translations from Latin into French.

Valeriu MARCU was born in Roumania and lived in Germany until the advent to power of the nazi régime. He is the author of numerous books on such subjects as Russia, the German army, Germany's religious wars, the Spanish Jews, etc. His latest book to appear in this country was "Accent of Power."

Joachim JOESTEN was born and educated in Germany. For many years he has been a newspaper correspondent, representing the Washington *Post* and *Time* in Scandinavia. He has written for the New York *Herald Tribune, Foreign Affairs,* the *Nation* and other magazines. A year before the event he described the invasion of Denmark in his book "Rats in the Larder."

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